United Nations S/2007/552

Security Council

Distr.: General
20 September 2007
English
Original: French

Letter dated 19 September 2007 from the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to confirm to you that during the presidency of the French Republic, a debate on the topic of "Peace and Security in Africa" will be held in the Council on 25 September 2007, chaired by Mr. Nicolas Sarkozy, President of the Republic.

The French Republic has prepared a concept paper to help guide the discussion on that occasion (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Jean-Maurice **Ripert**
Ambassador
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Annex to the letter dated 19 September 2007 from the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Debate of the Security Council on peace and security in Africa

Concept paper

In many areas, Africa has made substantial progress: the continent is experiencing strong economic growth; several crises are currently being resolved, for example those in Burundi, Liberia and Sierra Leone; the construction of the African Union is proceeding apace and the African regional organizations have become crucial players in conflict prevention and resolution in Africa.

The United Nations is particularly engaged in Africa, in both development assistance and peacekeeping. More than two thirds of all United Nations peacekeeping forces are assigned there. The largest United Nations peacekeeping operation to date, MONUC, is deployed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the largest operation mandated by the Security Council, UNAMID, will be operational in Darfur (Sudan) in coming months. A major focus of the Security Council's work is support for peace and stability in Africa.

It is crucial that the international community continue its efforts to support those being made by Africans. Further progress is indispensable. The serious crises affecting such places as Darfur and Somalia have not yet been resolved. Other major challenges, such as environmental protection, call for increased attention and support.

To be effective, the action taken by the international community must be part of a comprehensive approach and a close partnership with African organizations — first and foremost, the African Union.

1. *What are the main challenges to peace and security facing Africa?*

– Consolidation of peace in West Africa and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, requires determined collective action to eliminate the basic factors causing instability once and for all. This raises a number of challenges: How can the recurrence of conflict be prevented, particularly through strengthening the rule of law and reforming the security sector? How can the donor community be mobilized effectively and over the long term?

– Moreover, the crisis in Darfur and its regional ramifications in Chad and the Central African Republic remain a matter of serious concern. Unanimous adoption of resolution 1769 and the start of political discussions with a view to reaching an inclusive peace agreement are a step forward. The efforts of the international community to guarantee a lasting settlement to this crisis as quickly as possible must be stepped up. The political, security and humanitarian situation in Somalia also calls for close attention by the international community in support of the efforts of the African Union.

– Last but not least, Africa, like the other continents, must cope with global threats. Global warming and the illegal exploitation of natural resources, which continues to fuel crises in trouble spots, are severely affecting the African continent

and impeding its development. Other factors of instability, such as the struggle against terrorism, arms and drug trafficking, uncontrolled migratory flows and cross-border movement of armed groups, call for a collective and effective response.

2. *How can these multiple challenges be met?*

– Making the efforts of the international community more consistent.

We must focus on how to use the instruments available to the United Nations to better effect. How can the resources for peacekeeping operations be adapted and strengthened? When the Security Council must use coercive measures (individual sanctions, embargoes) to support its action in certain situations, how can these measures be made more effective and how can their negative impact be limited?

How can civilians and vulnerable populations be better protected at a time when conflict situations all too often entail serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law (child soldiers, sexual violence, violence against civilians, etc.)?

– Promoting an effective partnership between the United Nations and Africa, based on the African regional organizations.

The success of our efforts is to a great extent predicated on our ability to take collective action, involving the African players at all stages of crisis management. Substantial progress has been made in recent years, as illustrated in the joint action taken by the African Union and the United Nations in Darfur, the adoption of resolution 1769 and cooperation in other theatres such as Burundi, for example.

In order to go farther, how can enhanced African crisis management and resolution capacities be facilitated and how can the need for African peacekeeping training be met? How can the post-conflict recovery efforts that must be carried out by the African countries concerned be supported? How cant he establishment of more operational crisis prevention mechanisms be encouraged in Africa?

Beyond the regional organizations, how can the full range of players concerned — States, companies, NGOs, civil society, women's organizations — be involved to a greater extent? As the European Union has already shown, non-African regional organizations also have a role to play in supporting or supplementing the efforts being made by the United Nations and Africa.

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The meeting of the Security Council at the level of Heads of State and Government on 25 September 2007 is aimed at strengthening the mobilization of the international community and at working with representatives of the African Union to map out concrete and ambitious avenues for action. As Africa takes charge of its destiny and undertakes to make considerable efforts to promote peace, stability and development on the continent, the international community must lend it renewed and determined support with a view to achieving the Millennium Development Goals.